

# **Normalizing Executive Department Boundaries: A Timely First Step to Improving Interagency Coordination**

**A Monograph  
by  
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## **Abstract**

**NORMALIZING EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT BOUNDARIES: A TIMELY FIRST STEP TO IMPROVING INTERAGENCY COORDINATION** by MAJ David A. Meyer, US Army, 46 pages.

The lack of coordination between the executive departments of the United States government is impeding the nation's ability to fight the Global War on Terror. No solution to the problems facing the United States can be the exclusive responsibility of a single department and the departments do not appear able to synchronize their efforts. It is clear steps must be taken by the government to address this challenge.

This problem is not new and several administrations have attempted to address the issue. These options ranged from reorganization of smaller agencies into a larger one, such as the case of the Department of Homeland Security, to simply reprioritizing the efforts of the departments relative to one another, such as in Presidential Decision Directive 56. In each case, these efforts met with failure because the proposals were either unacceptable within the culture of the affected organizations, unfeasible due to excessive costs of reorganization or new agencies, or unable to be accomplished in a timely manner. Interagency coordination is too large a problem to be corrected by a single sweeping action. A smaller first step should be identified and this first step should be feasible, acceptable, and timely.

The executive departments all have internal boundaries which subdivide the world into areas of responsibility. Particularly between the State and Defense departments, these boundaries differ widely between the different agencies. These differences can be traced to an internally focused evaluation of the requirements of the department, relative to itself, rather than an externally focused policy which seeks to maximize national resources in pursuit of stated policy. Normalizing those boundaries can be the efficient first step in addressing the larger problem of interagency coordination. Normalizing boundaries would reduce the total number of sub-departmental organizations involved with developing policy for a given part of the world and would allow the members of different departments responsible for the same areas to increase their familiarity and trust with one another. A National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) could establish a policy coordination committee to develop the final boundaries and direct their implementation. Recommendations for a normalized system of boundaries and the proposed NSPD are included.

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## INTRODUCTION

The integration of US political and military objectives and the subsequent translation of these objectives into action have always been essential to success at all levels of operation.<sup>1</sup>

Interagency Coordination: The mere mention of the topic induces chills in some and outright anger in others. No other single issue commands more attention across the full range and spectrum of government. The 2006 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (NSS) makes it clear that it is essential that the nation continue “Improving the capacity of agencies to plan, prepare, coordinate, integrate, and execute responses covering the full range of crisis contingencies and long-term challenges.”<sup>2</sup> As the Global War on Terror (GWOT) is a truly national undertaking, it is increasingly clear that military force alone cannot resolve this long conflict. All the agencies of the government must operate in coordination for the nation to be victorious. During a recent hearing on Interagency Coordination in Combating Terrorism, held before the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), US Representative Curt Weldon (R-PA) effectively summed this up with the following statement:

As we fight the global war on terror, we face a determined, adaptive and ruthless enemy. Since this war began, President Bush and other senior leaders have repeatedly said that to preserve our freedom in the face of such an enemy, we must use all the instruments of our national power, such as diplomatic, economic, intelligence, law enforcement and military elements. Given this committee's particular focus on our armed forces, we would add that this effort cannot involve only, or even primarily, America's military services. Simply put, the fronts of engagement are so vast, no one agency can fight this war alone. So it follows that to effectively employ all of America's instruments of national power, the organizations involved, from Cabinet agencies to other non-Defense agencies, must collaborate and cooperate as seamlessly as possible.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 3.08, *Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination During Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 1.

<sup>2</sup>George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, September 2006), 45.

<sup>3</sup>US Congress, House, Armed Services Committee, *Hearing on Improving Interagency Coordination for the Global War on Terror*, Opening statement by Representative Curt Weldon, 109th Cong., 2nd sess., 4 April 2006, 1.



Representative Weldon sets lofty conditions to be successful in the GWOT, but he frames the problem efficiently. Why, for all the ability and influence wielded by the nation and with the incredible prosperity enjoyed by the population, are the executive departments of the US government unable to coordinate their activities in such a way as to harness the power of their country? It is clear that they must and that success depends on the full integration of all the departments.

## **Problem Background and Significance**

As the world has become a more complex place, so too have the challenges of coordinating the actions of one nation, relative to others. One need only look as far as the GWOT operations in Afghanistan and Iraq to see the implications inherent in worldwide US government actions. The problem is that no one sees the world the same way. There are no fewer than four different models currently in use by the Department of State (DOS), The Department of Defense (DOD), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the National Security Counsel (NSC). This inevitably leads to confusion and inefficiency in the interagency process. Table 1 describes each agency in comparison to the others.

Table 1. Comparison of Executive Department Internal Boundaries

Agency	DOD	DOS	NSC 2000	NSC 2005	CIA
Organization of focus areas	North America	Western Hemisphere	Inter-American	Western Hemisphere	Latin America
	South America				
	Asia/ Pacific	East Asia/ Pacific	East Asia	Asia	Asian Pacific
		South Asia		East Asia	South Asia
	Middle East/ North Africa	Near East	Middle East/ South Asia	Near East/ North Africa	Near East
	Europe/ Africa	Europe & Eurasia	Russia, Ukraine	Russia	Russia
			SE Europe	Europe	Europe
		Africa	Europe	Africa	Africa
			Africa		

Source: Department of Defense, *Unified Command Plan* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Available from <http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/unifiedcommand/>; Internet; accessed on 5 December 2005; and Department of State, *Alphabetical List of Bureaus and Offices* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/dos/1718.htm>; Internet; accessed on 5 December 2005.

To accomplish their mission of worldwide implementation of US foreign policy, both DOD and DOS divide the world into different subsets. These subsets delegate the responsibility for action and policy development. The DOD refers to these subsets as Combatant Commands (COCOMs) and the DOS calls them Bureaus. The DOD further defines the entire program regarding the management of COCOM boundaries and responsibilities as the Unified Command Plan (UCP), the word unified relating to the joint, or multiservice, nature of these areas of responsibility. Similarly, the DOS intends the Bureaus to coordinate the conduct of US foreign relations within their areas of responsibility.<sup>4</sup> In both DOD and DOS, the COCOM or Bureau is the major player in the implementation of national policy and goals. As both organizations see their subordinate components as the primary coordinators and executors of the higher policy, the issue of what geographic area is covered, both by an organization and by its peers, would seem to

<sup>4</sup>Central Intelligence Agency, *Directorate of Intelligence Organization* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2005), Available from [https://www.cia.gov/cia/di/org\\_chart\\_section.html](https://www.cia.gov/cia/di/org_chart_section.html); Internet; accessed on 5 December 2005.

be of primary importance. This is, unfortunately, not the case. In neither department is major consideration given to synchronization for both internal and external issues. The executive departments of the US government have spent considerable time and effort over the last sixty years to relate their internal organizations to national policy, world events, emerging capabilities, requirements, and internal political considerations. Almost no effort has been made to relate those organizations to the departments on their left and right at the Cabinet table. Figure 1 shows the DOD and DOS boundaries on a common map. The DOS bureaus are shaded and the COCOM boundaries are in bold lines.

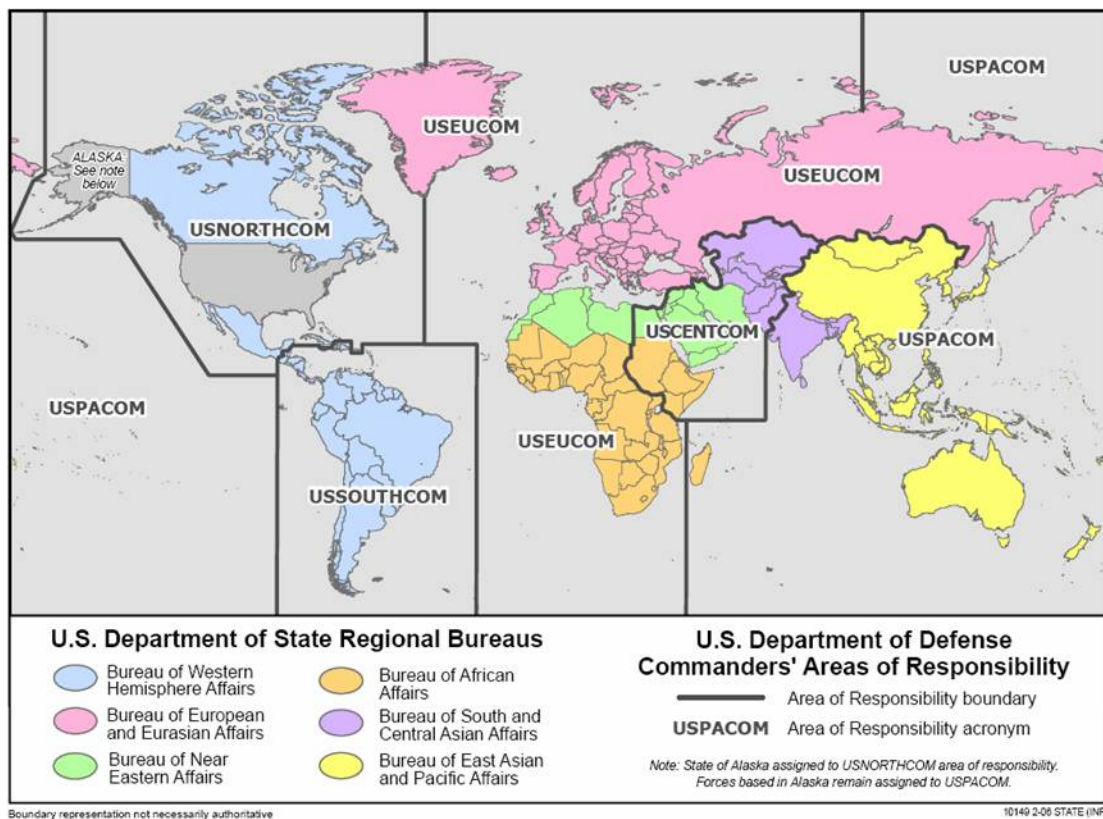


Figure 1. Comparison of DOS and DOD Boundaries

Source: Department of State, *Political-Military Security Assistance Map* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Available from <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/c17251.htm>; Internet; accessed on 30 October 2006.

One great example of DOD and DOS de-synchronization in the GWOT is in the Horn of Africa (HOA). Technically part of the DOD Central Command Area of Responsibility (CENTCOM AOR), the HOA is home to a sub-unified Joint Task Force (JTF) responsible for coordinating counterterrorism activities in that part of the world, particularly those involving smuggling onto or from the Arabian peninsula. JTF HOA is an excellent example of the success of DOD transformation, through the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, in that JTF HOA has had representatives of all four services in its staff and leadership from its inception and has always functioned effectively. The challenge comes when the DOS is considered. The DOS African Affairs Bureau has an area of responsibility that encompasses the African continent, south of the Saharan desert. This includes the island nation of Madagascar and the lesser islands off the Eastern coast of Africa. The DOD defines this region much differently. The DOD defines the African continent into two pieces, with the eastern islands considered a separate, third, area. Rather than use the Saharan desert as the dividing line, the DOD boundaries run from Southeast to Northwest, dividing the HOA region from greater Africa. Additionally, as the headquarters of the different DOD organizations responsible for this area span the globe from Tampa, Florida to Stuttgart Germany; to Camp Smith, Hawaii, the problems of coordination on that large a scale are significant. Consider the implications of this de-synchronization. For the Director of the Eastern Africa Department of the Bureau of African Affairs to coordinate their actions with the corresponding DOD agencies takes four different actions or contacts, one to each of the DOD COCOMs responsible for parts of Eastern Africa and one to JTF HOA. Similarly, for a US military officer, assigned to CJTF HOA, to arrange country clearances into the CJTF AOR and surrounding areas, takes coordination with at least two different DOS bureaus. Further complicating the matters in this region is the humanitarian crisis in the Darfur region of the Sudan where some two million refugees and internally displaced persons occupy camps spread between western Sudan and eastern Chad. As Chad is in the European Command (EUCOM) AOR and Sudan in the CENTCOM AOR, the potential for cross COCOM coordination exists. The solution

to this intra-DOD problem has fallen to JTF HOA, which is responsible for coordination and country clearances for officials visiting this troubled area. When the effects of normal personnel turbulence and reassignment are taken into account, what remains is a system in which familiarity of action officers is limited and a coordinated approach seems difficult to conceive. This challenge is almost completely created by a lack of synchronization of executive department boundaries. Figure 2 below describes the problem in greater detail.

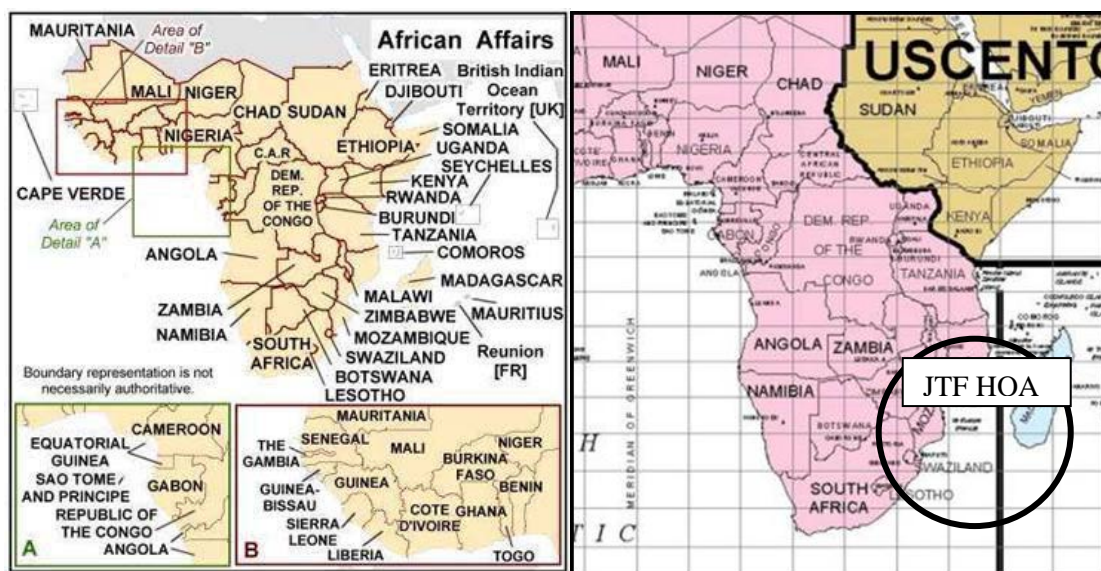


Figure 2. Side-by-Side Comparison of DOS and DOD Boundaries in Eastern Africa  
Source: Department of State, *Bureau of African Affairs* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Available from <http://www.state.gov/p/af/ci/index.htm>; Internet; accessed on 30 October 2006; and Department of Defense, *Unified Command Plan* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Available from <http://www.defenselink.mil/specials/unifiedcommand/>; Internet; accessed on 30 October 2006

The DOS African Bureau boundaries are on the left and an extract of the DOD UCP for the same area is on the right. In the DOD picture, the different shades represent different COCOM AOR and a graphic generally displaying the AOR for JTF HOA has been added by the author.

It is inconceivable in the modern, internet fueled, twenty-four-hour cable news fed, satellite phone equipped world, to imagine a circumstance where either the US military or diplomatic corps could act in a vacuum. That all the actions of a nation are public, interrelated, and subject to intense scrutiny must be taken as axiomatic. Within this system, a coordinated approach to international operations is critical. The President and National Security Counsel (NSC) have attempted to improve the functioning of the system in recent years, with limited success. These attempts, usually via the Presidential Directive or National Security Directive system, have amounted to little more than stopgap measures addressing the symptoms of the current problem without addressing the greater illness. These “band-aids” have made those involved in their passage feel better, but have never attempted any systemic change designed to truly improve the functioning of the process. These attempts, and other more recent suggestions, will be discussed in greater depth later in the monograph, but their failure can commonly be related to one of a few issues. These issues will be compared in the monograph based on three criteria. The first criterion is feasibility, in terms of likelihood of acceptance or resistance by both decision makers and the affected agencies. The second criterion is cost, in terms of overhead for reorganization or creation of new organizations. The third criterion is timeliness, in terms of duration to receive concurrence from decision makers and time required to implement the solution.

## **Scope and Limitations**

The challenge of interagency coordination is of great interest to the US government. No fewer than a dozen major studies are underway or have been completed relating to this most timely of issues. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) is currently in its third complete volume of the *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols* series relating to the challenges of Interagency coordination. As this monograph could not begin to cover the same breadth of information, a more focused approach must naturally follow. While nearly every major

department of the US government has international dealings and must define the world in some way, this monograph will narrow the focus of analysis to the US Departments of Defense (DOD) and State (DOS). These two organizations, more than any others, are the primary implementers of United States foreign policy, through either negotiations or agreements, or force if those efforts fail. Accepting the evaluation criteria listed above, many larger proposals for improving coordination become infeasible due to the extended time required for implementation, or the cultural resistance, or “pushback,” expected within an organization. This monograph is focused specifically on the issue of interagency boundaries, their genesis, evolution and possible options for change within the existing system. Specifically, the efficiencies available to a more coordinated system, the ease by which a boundary change could occur, the advantages in facilitating larger, subsequent change and a suggestion as to how the harmonized international boundary system might look.

## CHAPTER 1

The issue of multiorganizational synchronization is nothing new to the US government. Following World War II the National Security Act of 1947 (NSA 47) reorganized the government to provide advice to decision makers and to develop policy for both long- and short-term contingencies, by subordinating all of the military services to a common civilian leader. This act was significant as there had never been a common superior to the War and Navy Departments, save the president. This attitude of uniqueness was typified by a conversation, prior to World War I, between then Secretary of War Lindsey Garrison and Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels. When approached by Secretary Daniels about giving more attention to better coordination between their departments, Secretary Garrison responded:

Joe, I don't give a damn about the Navy and you don't care a damn about the Army. You run your machine and I will run mine. I am glad if anyone can convince me I'm wrong, but I am damn sure nobody lives who can do it. I am an individualist and am not cut out for cooperative effort. I will let you go your way, and I will go my way.<sup>5</sup>

In this case, the leaders believed no change was possible because of the enormity of the problem, the lack of a clear way ahead, and the lack of a formal requirement from higher-level civilian leadership to integrate their actions. Despite the fact that this conversation took place over ninety years ago, it bears a startling resemblance to many of the arguments regarding the interaction of the executive departments of the US government. Even once the problem was engaged by General Marshall's proposal favoring a "single department of war in the post-war period" in 1943, it would take more than four years, two of them involved in a two theater war, to develop and pass directive legislation to address the problem of inter-service coordination.<sup>6</sup> When passed, NSA 47 met with disbelief and resistance. The legislation was not well accepted by many of the rank-and-file members of the organizations it affected. In many ways, NSA 47 started a

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<sup>5</sup>Demetrios Caraley, *The Politics of Military Unification* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1966), 4.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 23.



process that would not really be completed until the passage of another sweeping reform nearly forty years later.

The Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 (hereafter Goldwater-Nichols) clarified the role of the JCS and established requirements to integrate the efforts and operational capabilities of the armed forces. Like its 1947 progenitor sought to integrate and formalize the duties and responsibilities of the nation's security organizations, Goldwater-Nichols was intended to synchronize the efforts of all the armed forces. While not engaged in a multi-theater conflict, 1986 was a time of great international tension for the US as the Cold War raged and international terrorism had begun to come to the forefront of the American consciousness. Like NSA 47, those it was to affect met Goldwater-Nichols with great resistance. In the twenty plus years since its passage, the US military has spent exhaustive amounts of time living up to the ideals and expectations of Goldwater-Nichols. The Persian Gulf War of 1991 demonstrated the potential effectiveness of these efforts, and the integration demonstrated by the forces that seized Baghdad in 2003 proved their success. In 2006 it can be stated conclusively that the US military is the most synchronized joint military force in the world. And it only took sixty years.

The inherent difference in transforming the Defense structure versus the executive departments presents the next major hurdle in the evolution of the government, particular the interagency process. That which differentiates the Service Members of the DOD from the other executive department employees is the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). In the oath of enlistment or commissioning, a Service Member swears to "Obey the orders of the Officers appointed over me." He does not swear to do this most of the time, or when it suits him, and he certainly does not swear to stall until the current administration is voted out of power and new leadership is appointed. This is part of the problem faced when attempting to reform the bureaucratic systems of power resident within the US Government. This critical difference is lost on most outside observers when recommending changes to the interagency system to address some of the problems identified previously.

The current US government, faced with a similar two-theater engagement, has only started the process to integrate the actions of the executive departments. A solution is likely years, possibly decades, away from passage and decades further still away from full implementation.

## **What Has Already Been Proposed or Tried?**

While no solution has yet to fall from the sky to correct the challenges of interagency coordination, several attempts have been made by various administrations and several other proposals have been posited by everyone from policy institute think tanks to SAMS students. Three attempts or proposals will be considered for the purposes of this monograph; Presidential Decision Directive (PDD)-56, National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD)-44, and the “super executive agency” concept. Following a brief description, the causes of failure or components affecting effectiveness will be discussed.

PDD-56 was the Clinton administrations attempt to synchronize the interagency process. Titled *Managing Complex Contingency Operations* it was

designed to ensure that the lessons learned -- including proven planning processes and implementation mechanisms -- will be incorporated into the interagency process on a regular basis. The PDD’s intent is to establish these management practices to achieve unity of effort among U.S. Government agencies and international organizations engaged in complex contingency operations. Dedicated mechanisms and integrated planning processes are needed. From our recent experiences, we have learned that these can help to:

- identify appropriate missions and tasks, if any, for U.S. Government agencies in a U.S. Government response;
- develop strategies for early resolution of crises, thereby minimizing the loss of life and establishing the basis for reconciliation and reconstruction;
- accelerate planning and implementation of the civilian aspects of the operation;
- intensify action on critical funding and personnel requirements early on;
- integrate all components of a U.S. response (civilian, military, police, etc.) at the policy level and facilitate the creation of coordination mechanisms at the operational level; and rapidly identify issues for senior policy makers and ensure expeditious implementation of decisions

The PDD requires all agencies to review their legislative and budget authorities for supporting complex contingency operations and, where such authorities are inadequate to fund an agency's mission and operations in complex contingencies, propose legislative and budgetary solutions.”<sup>7</sup>

Signed by the president in 1997, PDD-56 seems to be a large step in the right direction.

What it lacks, though, is tangible products and deadlines for implementation. It is, in effect, a “wish-list” for how an effective interagency process would run. A study conducted by A.B Technologies some two years later found that “the spirit and intent of PDD-56 directed training is not being followed. No one has stepped forward in the leadership role.”<sup>8</sup> PDD-56 failed to be fully successful because it was infeasible. The NSC was never designed to be a policy-making organization, with directive powers, rather, it has been a policy coordinating body, with resources and personnel dedicated to providing a shared environment where different executive departments and agencies can approach one another on common ground to synchronize their actions. The success of PDD-56 depended on the individual agencies to want to change and to act accordingly. Such behavior is not the natural way of things in the bureaucratic centers of the US government. Large parts of the entrenched bureaucracy in the government exist to ensure their continued existence. Any solution which fundamentally changed the status quo with regards to funding, manning, access to decision makers, or prestige could have been expected to be resisted by the established system. Attempting to solve the entire problem at once, with only a Presidential directive rather than formal legislative action, was a little like trying to kill a virus without antibiotics. While hope can improve your outlook, some actual medicine is probably required. The failure of PDD-56 strongly implies that those involved in the interagency process will not correct the problem themselves unless given a specific goal, and a legal requirement to achieve it.

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<sup>7</sup>National Security Council, Presidential Decision Directive 56, *Managing Complex Contingency Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 1997), 1.

<sup>8</sup>Rowan Scarborough, “Study Hits White House on Peacekeeping Missions,” *Washington Times*, 6 December 1999, Available from <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd/991206-pdd.htm>; Internet; accessed on 30 October 2006.

In many ways, each successive administration seems doomed to repeat at least some of the mistakes of their predecessors. The current Bush administration is using NSPD-44 in an attempt to address the interagency problem. Published to supersede PDD-56, NSPD-44 is not technically about interagency coordination. Its proper title is *Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization*.<sup>9</sup> It is the opinion of the administration that by selecting one particular area requiring governmental cooperation, reconstruction, and stabilization of failed or failing states in this case, that an incremental approach to the interagency issue may be taken. At issue in the implementation of NSPD-44 is the cost in terms on manpower and dollars to integrate the executive departments' efforts. Thus far, the Bush administration, in its FY2007 Budget Request, has only asked for \$75 million for the Conflict Response Fund, designed to provide immediate deployment funding in a crisis situation. The Center for Effective Peacekeeping claims a more realistic cost estimate for this fund is \$200 million, with an additional \$200 million required to establish and fund a civilian Active Response Corps and a civilian reserve capacity for stabilization and reconstruction activities, neither of which was requested by the administration.<sup>10</sup> While the final assessment on the effectiveness of NSPD-44 has not been conducted, it appears doomed to be marginally effective. Like PDD-56, NSPD-44 lacks clear definitions of DOD vs. DOS roles and the funding in overhead or operational budget required to be fully effective. Again, the issues of feasibility and cost are causal factors in the failure of a system. Once again, the idea of correcting the problems of the interagency all at once with a single non-legislative directive seems to be at work. Albert Einstein once said, "Insanity is the belief that one can get different results by doing the same thing." NSPD-44 seems to repeat the mistakes of PDD-56, with predictable results.

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<sup>9</sup>National Security Counsel, National Security Presidential Directive 44, *Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, December 2005), 3.

<sup>10</sup>Partnership for Effective Peacekeeping, *Peacebuilding Is a National Security Interest With No Funding* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 2006), Available from <http://effectivepeacekeeping.org/docs/pep/bn-sr-directives-may06.pdf>; Internet; accessed on 30 October 2006.

The “super agency” solution to interagency coordination has been advanced by a number of different organizations in recent years. The theory of the solution assumes that the coordination problems facing the executive departments of the US government are too great to be solved by the organizations themselves, given the rigidity of the established bureaucracy, and that a solution is only possible by creating a “super-executive” agency to direct change to the existing structure. Much like the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2002 installed an executive department over many, previously separate, organizations; the super-agency plan would create a new department, which would be empowered to forcibly change the interaction of the (now-subordinate) executive departments. A very strong basis for this option exists in US federal law. Title 5 of the US Code established the executive departments as separate entities, equal to one another, subordinate only to the President, and subject to the laws enacted by the Congress. In Chapter Nine of Title 5, “Executive Reorganization,” the President is granted broad powers to assess the effectiveness of the Government and, as necessary, change its structure. Chapter 9, paragraph 901 begins, “The President shall from time to time examine the organization of all agencies and shall determine what changes in such organization are necessary to carry out any policy set forth in subsection (a) of this section.”<sup>11</sup> Paragraph 903 continues; “Whenever the President, after investigation, finds that changes in the organization of agencies are necessary to carry out any policy set forth in section 901 (a) of this title, he shall prepare a reorganization plan specifying the reorganizations he finds are necessary.”<sup>12</sup> Clearly then, the President has the constitutional power to enact the super-agency plan. While it appears well within the powers of the executive branch, there are two main reasons the super-agency plan has not been attempted, cost and feasibility. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security in 2002 exemplifies

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<sup>11</sup>US Government, *US Code Title 5, Part I, Chapter 9, §901*, Available from [http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode05/usc\\_sec\\_05\\_00000901----000-.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode05/usc_sec_05_00000901----000-.html); Internet; accessed on 30 October 2006.

<sup>12</sup>US Government, *US Code Title 5, Part I, Chapter 9, §903*, Available from [http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode05/usc\\_sec\\_05\\_00000903----000-.html](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/html/uscode05/usc_sec_05_00000903----000-.html); Internet; accessed on 30 October 2006.

these factors. Created in the wake of the 11 September 2001 attacks, DHS assumed control over twenty-two previously separate federal government agencies with a mandate to coordinate and synchronize their separate efforts into a single national response plan and network. Nearly five years after its creation, great debate still exists whether or not this consolidation has been successful. Highlighted by the lackluster federal response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the DHS consolidation has been marked by infighting and public complaints of a lack of focus and direction for the Department. In his December 2005 interview with *The Washington Post*, former FEMA Director Michael Brown spoke in depth about unclear chains of command and murky delineations of responsibility. Former Director Brown believed these inefficiencies directly contributed to the Katrina debacle..<sup>13</sup>

The creation of the DHS has also come with an annual price tag of \$30 billion. This \$30 billion is not to fund the actions of the twenty-two subordinate agencies, but simply to fund the reorganization and administrative costs involved in establishing and operating and executive department. These challenges are significant to the study of interagency coordination generally, and the super-agency plan specifically, because of the depth and breadth of change necessary. If the DHS cannot synchronize the efforts of twenty-two small federal agencies, none of which were previously designated as executive agencies in *USC 5*, toward a common goal then more sweeping reformation seems unlikely. One could assume a multiplicative effect from the amount of resistance and infighting generated by the small agencies absorbed by the DHS and level of resistance to be encountered when the Departments of State and Defense are told to report to a new boss, who is not the President. While clearly supported by US law, the size, scope, cost, and expected resistance of the super agency solution to the problem of interagency coordination render it infeasible.

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<sup>13</sup>“Brown’s Turf Wars Sapped FEMA’s Strength,” *Washington Post*, 23 December 2005, A01, Available from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/22/AR2005122202213.html>; Internet; accessed on 30 October 2006.

## **What Is The Root Problem?**

There is a common element to many of the unsuccessful solutions or suggestions to the problem of interagency coordination. Each of the previously discussed options involved significant change to the system. Each was sweeping in its scope and massive in its impact. Each of the solutions sought the kind of change that Goldwater-Nichols brought to the DOD. Nevertheless, change on such a scale is not feasible without national motivation. It took the tragedy of the September 11th attacks to motivate the creation of the DHS, an organization still struggling to clearly define itself, and no such event has occurred to spur fundamental change to the executive departmental system.

Large bureaucratic organizations are notoriously unwilling to change, and will resist change as strongly as their position allows. This cultural resistance, or “pushback,” can take many forms from passive to active. Given the highly transient nature of ruling parties and political appointees, relative to the lifespan of a career bureaucrat, resistance often takes the form of simple inaction. On the assumption that the leadership requiring the change will only be in charge for a limited time, the organization may seek to wait out the leader and reengage the status quo with the successor. If unabated, this method can progress almost indefinitely. Another method of pushback is to maintain cultural bias against the change. In the days immediately following the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the DOD resisted the requirements to fully resource the Joint Staff by maintaining the cultural norm that characterized joint duty as undesirable. Further, Officers assigned to joint duty were seldom among the finest their respective services had to offer. By maintaining the anti-joint culture, the DOD was attempting to pushback against the Congress. This method has a tendency to fade over time, as those most resistant to change are phased out or retire. The most overt method of resistance to change generally involves a public airing of differences of opinion. The public statements of then Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger, decrying the need for any form of defense reorganization, let alone sweeping

legislation, are an excellent example of public resistance to change. Some, or all, of these methods are common among large organizations resisting change.

It appears clear that interagency coordination will not be brought about in a single step. To refer to a children's story, it seems that the elephant cannot be eaten in a single bite. A smaller, more timely, first step, seems to be the most viable option available. The successful option would have to be acceptable within the culture of an organization, feasible within the budgets of the organization and not so complex as to require excessive time to implement. Given their internally defined nature, the absence of change of scope of funding of the given organizations and ease of implementation, addressing interagency coordination by redefining the sub-departmental boundaries may well be that first step.



## CHAPTER 2

### What Are Boundaries And Why Do They Exist?

Before detailing the challenges and shortfalls inherent in the current system, a closer examination of how the individual departments arrived at their current position is important.

The DOD UCP grew out of the Defense Reorganization Act of 1947, which established the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a directive body over all the Armed Service, and the worldwide disposition of US forces following World War II. Seeking to achieve unity in military action among all the Armed Forces, the original UCP divided the world into areas designed to create maximum synchronization without impinging on the historic autonomy of the services to accomplish their assigned missions as they best saw fit. Despite the observed need for such coordination, Service infighting and rivalries delayed the implementation of the first UCP, called the Outline Command Plan, until 1955.<sup>14</sup> In the fifty plus years that have followed, the DOD has made dozens of major and minor changes to the plan, reflective of the changes in world situation and requirements. As of 2007, with another major change pending, the DOD organizes itself into regional and functional Combatant Commands. The Regional Combatant Commands (RCC) are those COCOMs tasked with the actual planning and implementation of National Policy, while the functional commands generally control major commodities involved in the actions of the RCC. US Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) is an example of one such functional command. USTRANSCOM controls all the ground, sea, and air transportation assets in the US arsenal and is responsible to the regional commands to move forces to their areas of responsibility. Functional commands are special in that they have no boundaries, per se, but are responsible to all the regional commanders in their particular area. The boundaries of the regional

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<sup>14</sup>Ronald H. Cole, Walter S. Poole, James F. Schnabel, Robert J. Watson, and Willard J. Webb, *The History of the Unified Command Plan* (Washington, DC: Joint History Office, 2003), 12.

commands are established by the DOD, approved by the Secretary of Defense and published by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The DOS Bureau design grew from similar models. The lacks of definitive information regarding the gradual changes to the DOS since its inception speak to the challenges inherent in transforming it. The State Department is a highly intellectual organization, populated with some of the best minds the country has to offer. One drawback of this policy though, is the reluctance to accept outside input to decision regarding their organization. Following World War II, the State Department was faced with major reorganization in line with those happening in the other executive departments. Commenting on the man brought in to execute these changes in *The Department of State*, Graham Stuart describes the reaction to the appointment of businessman Edward Stettinius as Under Secretary of State.

Unquestionably, a reorganization was badly needed; but in an agency like the State Department, where international law, protocol and diplomatic savoir-faire enter into the procedure, such a reorganization must be made slowly and by experts fully conversant with the intangibles in the conduct of foreign policy.<sup>15</sup>

Clearly then, the State Department has demonstrated equal, if not greater, resistance to change than the DOD. Within this highly resistant system, the State Department was organized into multiple divisions, among them the Offices of American Republic Affairs, European Affairs, Far Eastern Affairs, and Near Eastern and African Affairs, through which responsibility for the world was divided. While some minor changes have continued to affect the organization of the department, DOS still follows this model today. Similar to the DOD, the process for changing the organization of the DOS is strictly internal. Even if initiated by an outsider, the process involves recommendation by officials within the organization and approval by the Secretary of State. Cordell Hull was once reported to have claimed that foreign policy is not made by the President or Secretary of State, but by the “desk” officers responsible for the daily activities relative to a

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<sup>15</sup>Graham H. Stuart, *The Department of State* (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1949), 389.

nation or area. Given this assertion, it seems critically important that the efforts of the nation be as coordinated as possible.<sup>16</sup> This sentiment is echoed by General Sir Rupert Smith in *The Utility of Force*. General Smith, a former commander of British forces in the 1991 Gulf War and Ireland, and the former Deputy Commander of Allied forces in NATO, asserts that a paradigm shift has occurred, which changes the emphasis of combat from an industrial based, state centric, annihilation based system, to one of politically driven, lower intensity wars amongst the people. He believes that the new environment which nations exist requires a more integrated approach to the development of strategy. Specifically, he says:

Presently our institutions are structured like stovepipes, from the tactical to the strategic, and except in particular cases there is little interaction between them – a fact particularly evident when dealing with multinational organizations. We need to have the ability to bring them together, at least at the theatre level and probably lower, so that their actions are directed by one set of hands and their actions are coherent.<sup>17</sup>

## **Would Boundary Changes Really Help?**

Outside of the purely academic debate over coordination and efficiency, the question of actual effectiveness remains unaddressed. Even if the changes are within the institutional tolerance of an organization, and are timely and cost efficient, if they do not accomplish the goal, the change is not worth executing. Some experts believe that the scope of change imparted by changes boundaries would be insufficient. Mr. John De Jarnette, a strategist who works in the policy directorate of the Office of the Secretary of Defense and is a UCP action officer stated, in a 30 October 2006 electronic mail to the author that no change without legislative authority will be effective. He claims that “normalizing” interagency boundaries seems convenient and a short road to efficient response but that imposing a standard organization on the entire government would simplify things from an interagency coordination perspective, it could create tremendous

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<sup>16</sup>Bryton Barron, *Inside the State Department* (New York, NY: Comet Press, 1956), 94.

<sup>17</sup>General Sir Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force, The Art of War in the Modern World* (London: Penguin Group, 2005), 388.

inefficiencies within many smaller organizations like the Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, Treasury, and Agriculture, who do not have the resources to organize, man, or operate multiple internal organizations. He believes that the organizations would necessarily adapt to that inefficiency but imposing new structures would not solve the problems for long. To Mr. De Jarnette, the answer lies not in redrawing boundaries, but in legislation that requires interagency cooperation for foreign policy matters.<sup>18</sup>

Clearly Mr. De Jarnette's beliefs demonstrate the frustration felt by many of the main players in the interagency system. As a result, an "all or nothing" mentality is prevalent within the system. Clearly any solution, short or long term, to the interagency coordination problem will have to have a directive element, but a solution which is acceptable to the affected organizations will require less legal "arm twisting." Here again, is a great value of boundary normalization. Unlike more sweeping changes, which require time, money and large institutional acceptance, boundary normalization requires little more than organizations are already willing to do to themselves. Given the ability to change, it would seem that all that would be required is a neutral forum and process to determine the requirements of a harmonized system.

## **What Is The Problem Between Organizations?**

The root of the problem is that each organization is free to review and implement these organizational divisions and does so independently of any other US government organization. While Title 10, *USC* 161 requires an evaluation of the UCP "not less often than every two years," individual departments conduct major reviews of these boundaries at irregular intervals and usually only when forced by a change in internal or external conditions. The real problem is that the organizations themselves do not perceive a problem of coordination. Mr. DeJarnette defends the current system with the assertion that the DOD boundaries are different because the DOD has

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<sup>18</sup>John DeJarnette, Electronic mail with author, 30 October 2006, Ft Leavenworth, KS.

different missions than DOS. He claims that military-to military relations require the DOD to split certain countries so that they can have a veneer of transparency. He believes that the DOS responsibilities are different, so they organize differently. To him, the challenge becomes coordination of effort and dispute resolution within USG. When developing changes to the UCP, Mr. De Jarnette claims DOD considers the DOS boundaries and discuss their impact on their own UCP decisions. They even try to integrate with DOS as much as practical military considerations allow. Span of control, unity of command, and established relationships all impact on UCP decisions. In the end though, he finds that some discontinuity in formal organizational boundaries is beneficial: you get different perspectives, and you automatically have alternative venues to introduce (“socialize”) new ideas into a complex bureaucracy.<sup>19</sup> Paradoxical statements like “legislation could fix the problem” and “some inefficiency is good” truly frame the problem as it exists in the minds of those in the system.

Mr. De Jarnette’s comments clearly illustrate one of the most significant challenges facing the reform of the interagency system, the primary focus of organizational reform is internal versus externally oriented. That an organization would even be allowed by the government to pursue internal changes with international implications, with nothing more than consideration of the other agencies requirements, exemplifies the problem. The problem is one of exclusive, competing systems.

In *The Logic of Failure*, Dietrich Dörner describes common reasons for failure and the systemic missteps resident in the average organization. Dörner details a common source of failure as “failing to recognize the need to see a problem embedded in the context of other problems.”<sup>20</sup> Dörner’s work centers on an examination of complex systems. He defines complex systems as “systems that derive their complexity from the presence of many interrelated variables.” Clearly, the interagency system meets this description. He goes on to describe a system as “a network of

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Dietrich Dörner, *The Logic of Failure* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Books, 1996), 10.

many variables in a causal relationship to one another. “Dörner conducted his experiments with simulations of complex systems. From these experiments, he made several observations relative to the traits of successful, versus unsuccessful, participants in his experiments. The first relevant behavior of a successful participant was their systemic, rather than single aspect, approach to decision making. Dörner states, “It makes sense, then, to keep this aspect of complex systems in mind and to consider not just the primary goal of any given measure but also its potential effects on other sectors of the system.” Similarly, the good participants focused their efforts and research on the causal links behind events as opposed to the unsuccessful ones, who tended to take things at face value without relation to one another.

Another critical observation made by Dörner was the level of reflection and self-correction made by successful and unsuccessful participants. Generally, the good participants were able to critically examine their own behavior over time, assess their strengths and weaknesses and select subsequent courses of action designed to reflect corrections. These deliberations never lost sight of the true goal. Conversely, the less successful participants tended to lack focus in their analysis, varying between insufficient depths of analysis to excessive depth in a very narrow field of consideration. What most unsuccessful participants had in common was the tendency to attempt to solve the problems they were able to solve rather than the problems they ought to be trying to solve.

This, then, is the heart of the interagency boundary problem. Since their inceptions, the different executive agencies have constructed their boundaries in an entirely stove piped manner. The focus of the decision makers in an organization has been almost entirely internal, rather than systemic. Little thought has been given to the causal links between systems, rather than just within departments. Without coordination and synchronization of efforts, the actions of the various departments over time have had the exact opposite of the desired effect, complicating, rather than synchronizing, international policy efforts.

## Turning A Weakness Into Strength?

The characteristics which have complicated the system provide the method for its synchronization. As detailed earlier, organizations can “pushback” against changes they perceive as too extreme or as detrimental to the survival or prestige of the organization. For change to be successful it should be of the type which inflames as few of the institutional norms as possible. Boundary changes could fit this profile for the simple reason that they already change. In 2005 the DOS modified the South Asian bureau to create the South Central Asian Bureau, owing to the increased profile and importance of India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan as partners in the Global War on Terror and the continuing scrutiny of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction from and through that part of the world. This action happened with little internal dissent or turmoil as these were routine reorganizations, which threatened none of the core values of the department. Similarly, in 2006, the DOD reassigned responsibility for Cuba and many of the Caribbean islands from USNORTHCOM to USSOUTHCOM. This reflected the realization of the increased role that Cuba plays in Central and South American politics and the focus on internal and homeland security issues desired by USNORTHCOM. Again, this decision was met with no collective angst, as there was no threat perceived to the organization. In this idea of acceptable internal change lies the method for the first step in interagency coordination. It could be possible to coordinate the geographical definitions of the executive departments using existing mechanisms, which are perceived as unthreatening by the organizations themselves, without the “pushback” experienced in earlier attempts to change the system. This realization is the heart of the boundary argument.

For the coordination to be effectively implemented, however, great care must be given to the forum used to discuss these changes and the specific actor tasked to implement them. There must exist, among all those involved, the reasonable expectation of fair treatment and unbiased decision making. Only in a neutral arena could executive departments submit themselves to the

external process of coordination. Such an organization already exists in the US government's national security architecture, the National Security Counsel.

NSPD-1 establishes the National Security Council (NSC) to advise the President with respect to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to national security.

The President has directed the NSC to:

advise and assist me in integrating all aspects of national security policy as it affects the United States - domestic, foreign, military, intelligence, and economics. The National Security Council system is a process to coordinate executive departments and agencies in the effective development and implementation of those national security policies.<sup>21</sup>

Given this, the NSC seems the proper vehicle to coordinate the normalization of executive department boundaries. The NSC has several subcomponents. A principals committee, made up of the primary decision makers (the actual Secretaries of State, Defense, the Chairman of the JCS, and others), a deputies committee, made up of the principal deputies to the above decision makers, and policy coordination committees, where the actual work is done. Specifically NSPD-1 directs that:

Management of the development and implementation of national security policies by multiple agencies of the United States Government shall usually be accomplished by the NSC Policy Coordination Committees (NSC/PCCs). The NSC/PCCs shall be the main day-to-day fora for interagency coordination of national security policy. They shall provide policy analysis for consideration by the more senior committees of the NSC system and ensure timely responses to decisions made by the President. Each NSC/PCC shall include representatives from the executive departments, offices, and agencies represented in the NSC/DC. . . . The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, at my direction and in consultation with the Vice President and the Secretaries of State, Treasury, and Defense, may establish additional NSC/PCCs as appropriate.<sup>22</sup>

The NSC PCC would appear to be the correct method by which departmental boundary normalization could be accomplished. A PCC would be established by Presidential directive which would engage the issue of executive department boundaries and the various agencies

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<sup>21</sup>National Security Counsel, National Security Presidential Directive 1, *Organization of the National Security Council System* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, February 2001), 2-4.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*



would contribute representatives to create the recommendation, which would then be submitted to the higher, decision making, committees.

According to the fifth edition of *American National Security*, the NSC is, in practice, a venue to correlate cross-boundary issues and keep all departments informed of significant issues that might affect more than one agency. Each president uses NSC differently, as can be seen in the different executive directions (NSPDs, PDDs, and others) that govern interagency cooperation through NSC. Under its current formulation, the NSC is organized along regional and functional lines (see NSPD-1). This organization does not “match” any government agency organization precisely; rather it reflects “clusters” of US interests. Bureaucratically, it allows NSC to remain above the fray, showing no preference to one department over another in how it is organized. The current NSC functional organization follows the geographic “cluster” principle, and allows room for ad-hoc “sub-PCC” meetings to address emerging issues.”<sup>23</sup>

Clearly then, the NSC is the proper vehicle for change. It meets all the above criteria as a neutral place for coordination, and possesses the required power to organize and implement the change decisions reached within.

## **Why Has This Not Already Been Done?**

If the evolution of the asynchrony in boundaries was subtle, and the solution is acceptable within the institutional culture of the organizations involved, it begs the question; why has this not already happened. Often a solution can seem so obvious, very little thought is given to its actual implementation.

As early as 1997, in a monograph titled “A Blueprint for a Bold Restructuring of the Organization for National Security, Colonel Michael Pasquarett and Professor (Lieutenant Colonel, Retired) James Kievit of the US Army War College Center for Strategic Leadership

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<sup>23</sup> Amoa A. Jordan, William J. Taylor, and Michael J. Mazarr. *American National Security*, 5th ed. (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 220-222.

suggested similar changes. Fully four years before the events of 11 September 2001 brought interagency coordination to the forefront they recognized that:

The best national security policy is integrated – diplomatically, economically, culturally and militarily. Realigning the geographic responsibilities of the DOD regional combatant commands and the DOS political affairs bureaus to match up theater level actors more closely is a first step toward achieving the required integration.<sup>24</sup>

In the CSIS *Beyond Goldwater Nichols II* study, recommends a similar approach, as part of a larger strategy. The issue of boundary normalization, though, only gets a single line entry as a final recommendation. It is the only one of the dozens of recommendations lacking a multiple page explanation and gets only one paragraph out of 156 pages. CSIS concluded that the government should establish a common framework for defining the regions of the world.

The NSC should lead an interagency review of how various agencies divide the world into regions for the purposes of policy execution, with the aim of creating a common regional framework that could be used across the U.S. government. The resulting framework should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure it adapts to changes in the international security environment.<sup>25</sup>

It is clear that the idea of boundary normalization is not new. Where this monograph differs from many of the previous recommendations, though, is that while boundary revision is normally offered as part of a larger plan, it is proposed as a stand-alone measure. Again, this could mitigate the amount of institutional resistance any reformation might encounter, while actually imposing substantive change on the system.

Further complicating the challenge in interagency coordination is the lack of advocacy or ownership of the issue by a policymaker. Using defense reorganization as an example, it took the combined efforts of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (General Jones) and several influential members of Congress (Senator Goldwater and Representative Nichols) to initiate the

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<sup>24</sup>Michael Pasquarett and James Kievit, “A Blueprint for a Bold Restructuring of the Organization for National Security Phase One: The Military Combatant Commands and State Department Regional Bureaus,” Research Study, US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1997, 25.

<sup>25</sup>Clark A. Murdock, Michèle A. Flournoy, Kurt M. Campbell, Pierre A. Chao, Julianne Smith, Anne A. Witkowsky, and Christine E. Wormuth, *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols II: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2005), 38; Available from [http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/bgn\\_ph2\\_report.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/bgn_ph2_report.pdf); Internet; accessed on 30 October 2006.

process that led to their landmark legislation. Thus far, no such sponsor of interagency coordination has come forward. As quoted earlier, Representatives Weldon and Hunter have shown some interest in the topic, but as of early 2007, neither is in a position to force the issue.<sup>26</sup> In the absence of such advocates as Goldwater and Nichols, the interagency process seems unlikely to change.

Despite the lack of a sponsor, it is the sincere belief of the author that boundary normalization offers the best first step.

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<sup>26</sup>Representative Weldon was defeated in November 2006 and is no longer a member of the House of Representatives and Representative Hunter is reportedly considering a run for the Presidency in 2008 and is no longer the Chair of the House Armed Services Committee.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendation of this monograph is simple. The United States government should normalize the international boundaries of the executive departments. This would serve as a timely effective first step in the larger issue of interagency coordination.

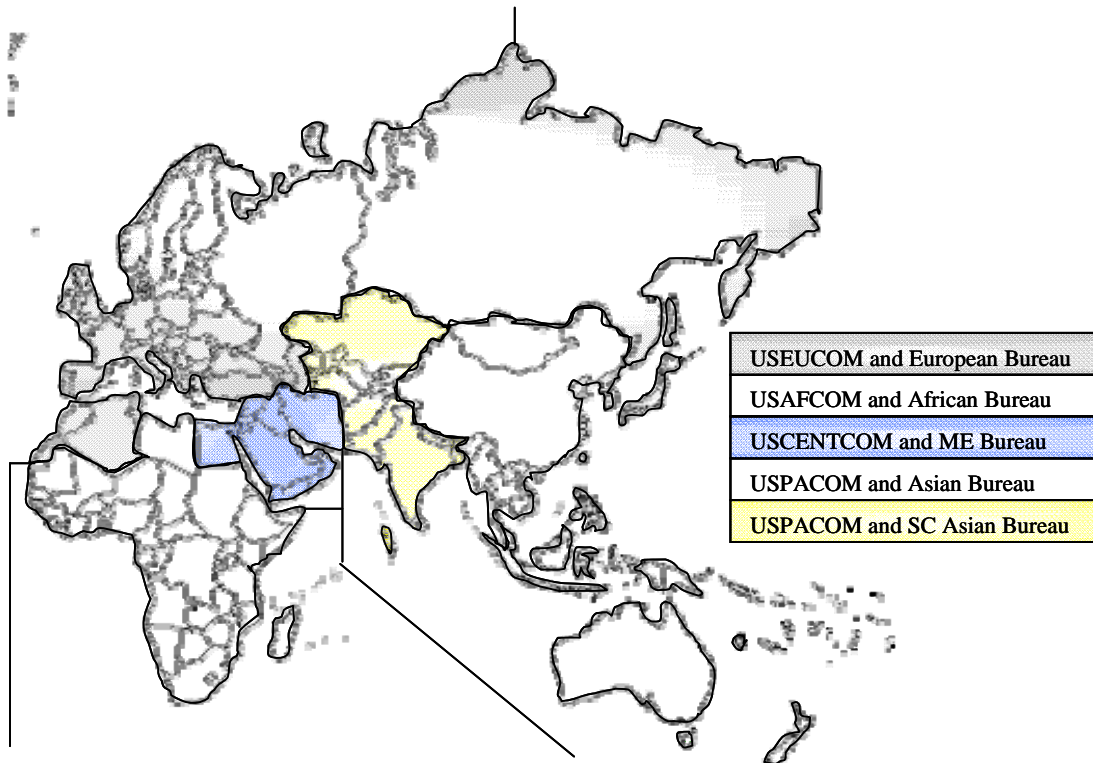


Figure 3. Final Harmonized Boundary Recommendations

In considering the boundaries a normalized system would contain, the historical diplomatic, military and economic relations between nations would be the primary factor. Figure 3 is the author's vision of the boundaries. A normalized environment would feature the following traits:

Figure 3: Proposed executive department boundaries in the Eastern Hemisphere:

USEUCOM and European Bureau: The European area would primarily encompass the European continent and Russia, the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, north of Western Sahara, like the current system. The most significant difference from the current system is the inclusion of the North African states of Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Western Sahara. These states have very strong economic ties to Europe as major consumers of exported North African oil and gas. Culturally, many of the relationships in the region spring from Spanish or French traditions. Finally, many of the counter-terrorism initiatives initiated in Europe extend into North Africa for supplies and personnel.

USAFRICOM and African Bureau: The African area would be the entire African continent, minus those countries in the European area and Egypt. The area would extend west approximately 300 miles into the Atlantic Ocean, then south to Antarctica. The eastern boundary would extend due east off the tip of Somalia approximately 750 miles then south and southeast toward Australia and Antarctica. Libya is included in the African area given their increasing role in regional politics. As Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Kenya, Sudan and Chad are all closely linked and highly unstable, they would fall into the African area instead of a Middle Eastern focused area.

USCENTCOM and Middle Eastern Bureau: This area would lose the most responsibility in a normalized system. Given the highly volatile nature of this area, the ability to focus diplomacy and resources seem appropriate. The area extends from Egypt to Iran and from Syria south to the tip of the Arabian Peninsula. The maritime area would include the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and approximately 500 miles southeast into the Indian Ocean. Egypt would be the only nation on the African continent, as their historical ties to the greater Middle East require inclusion in a Middle Eastern sphere.

USPACOM, SE Asian and Asian Bureau: This area is unique in that it demonstrates how executive departments can maintain their existing infrastructure while coordinating their efforts

internationally. The USPACOM boundaries should extend to encompass both the DOS SE Asian and Asian bureaus. This would still result in a single desk officer per country, per executive department. That USPACOM would have responsibility for both areas would be transparent given the linkages between individuals responsible for the individual countries. The area would encompass the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and would stretch from Afghanistan and the central Asian states, northeast to Japan, east to include Hawaii, and southeast to Australia.

USNORTHCOM, USSOUTHCOM and Western Bureau: The current organizations of the western hemisphere, relative to the DOD and DOS departmental boundaries, are not in conflict and would not require any adjustment. The recent transfer of Cuba and the Caribbean from USNORTHCOM to USSOUTHCOM eliminated the last remaining point of divergence between DOD and DOS in the Western Hemisphere. Additionally, given the external focus of the DOS and the internal focus of USNORTHCOM, no parallel can be expected to exist between them.

Once completed, the advantages possible in a normalized environment would become immediately obvious. First, there would be a reduction in the number of different groups responsible for the same area. To refer back to the example of pages 3-4, a normalized system would require a single call to coordinate action between the DOS and DOD actors in the east African region. Second, this increased regular contact would also allow those action officers responsible for the same areas to develop an increased level of familiarity and trust in one another. These personal connections would further streamline the process and would constitute the real first steps toward interagency coordination. In a harmonized environment, even problems that crossed the common boundaries would be handled more efficiently. For example, if a situation arose between Yemen and Somalia the action officers would come from the Middle Eastern and African sections of their organizations. These officers could be linked and familiar with one another in a number of ways. The ties that develop within a group of officers responsible for an area would bind the two groups together internally, and the ties that grow between

members of the same executive department would link the groups together externally. Ultimately the reduction of the “number of cooks in the kitchen” would lead to a more efficient and effective interagency solution to problems by increasing the level of familiarity and comfort within the system and with the actors.

As established earlier, the NSC would be the proper venue for addressing the issue of interagency boundaries. A NSPD would be required to initiate the formation and actions of a temporary PCC devoted to the boundary issue. While the precise language of the NSPD would be written by experts, it would require many of the following elements, introduction, policy goals, duties and responsibilities of major organizations, coordinating instructions for those organizations and changes to the organization of the NSC, specifically the establishment of the PCC. Using NSPD 44 as a guide, the notional NSPD might look like this:

#### NATIONAL SECURITY PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE/NSPD-99 <sup>27</sup>

##### MEMORANDUM FOR THE (Entire NSC)

SUBJECT: Normalization of Executive Department Boundaries

##### Introduction

The purpose of this Directive is to promote the security of the United States through improved coordination, planning, and synchronization of all activities conducted by an Executive Department in pursuit of National goals and objectives.

##### Policy

The United States must synchronize the actions taken abroad across the range of departments and instruments of national power. The policies developed toward a region must reflect a similar focus and unity of effort. The United States must insure the maximum use of options and resources are brought to bear on the problems facing the world and this is not possible in an environment where departments work at cross-purposes. This synchronization will enable the executive departments of the US Government to maximize the efficiency of effort of the personnel tasked with developing and implementing the policies of this nation.

Need for Coordinated U.S. Efforts. To achieve maximum effect, a focal point is needed (i) to coordinate and strengthen efforts of the United States Government to prepare, plan for, and conduct diplomacy and related activities in a range of situations that require the response

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<sup>27</sup>National Security Counsel, National Security Presidential Directive 44, 12.

capabilities of multiple United States Government entities and (ii) to harmonize such efforts with U.S. military plans and operations.

Coordination. The National Security Counsel Staff shall coordinate and lead integrated United States Government efforts, involving all U.S. Departments and Agencies with relevant capabilities, to prepare, plan for, and conduct reorganization activities. The Secretary of State shall coordinate such efforts with the Secretary of Defense to ensure harmonization with any planned or ongoing U.S. military operations across the spectrum of conflict. Support relationships among elements of the United States Government will depend on the particular situation being addressed.

#### Responsibilities of the Department of State

To achieve the objectives of this Directive, the Secretary of State shall be responsible for the following functions:

1. Coordinate interagency processes to identify states at risk of instability, lead interagency planning to prevent or mitigate conflict, and develop detailed contingency plans for integrated United States Government reorganization efforts for those states and regions and for widely applicable scenarios, which are integrated with military contingency plans, where appropriate;
2. Identify lessons learned and integrate them into operations;
3. When necessary, identify appropriate issues for resolution or action through the NSC interagency process in accordance with NSPD-1.

#### Responsibilities of the Department of Defense

To achieve the objectives of this Directive, the Secretary of State shall be responsible for the following functions:

1. Provide United States Government decision makers with detailed options for an integrated United States Government response in connection with specific reorganization operations including to recommend when to establish a limited-time sub-PCC-level group to focus on a country or region facing major reorganization challenges;
2. Identify lessons learned and integrate them into operations;
3. When necessary, identify appropriate issues for resolution or action through the NSC interagency process in accordance with NSPD-1.

#### Responsibilities of other Executive Departments and Agencies

To enable the execution of this directive and to activities and requirements with necessary resources, Executive Departments and Agencies whose programs and personnel may be able to assist in addressing the relevant challenges will:

1. Coordinate during budget formulation for relevant reorganization activities prior to submission to OMB and the Congress or as required to coordinate reorganization activities;
2. Identify, develop, and provide the Coordinator with relevant information on capabilities and assets:



3. Identify and develop internal capabilities for planning and for resource and program management that can be mobilized in response to crises;
4. Make available personnel on a non-reimbursable basis, as appropriate and feasible, to work as part of the EDPN PCC and develop plans for additional personnel exchanges, as appropriate, and across departments and agencies to increase interoperability for reorganization operations.

#### Coordination between the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense

The Secretaries of State and Defense will integrate military contingency plans with the synchronized boundary structure as appropriate. The Secretaries of State and Defense will develop a general framework for fully coordinating the transition of countries within Areas of Responsibility and military operations at all levels where appropriate.

Within the scope of this NSPD, and in order to maintain clear accountability and responsibility for any given contingency response or other mission, lead and supporting responsibilities for agencies and departments will be designated using the mechanism outlined in NSPD-1. These lead and supporting relationships will be re-designated as transitions are required.

#### Policy Coordination Committee

I hereby establish a Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) for Executive Department Boundary Normalization (EDPN PCC). The PCC will be chaired by the Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and a designated member of the NSC staff. The PCC shall include representatives in accordance with NSPD-1.

Nothing in this directive shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the authority of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budget, administrative, or legislative proposals.

[signed:] George W. Bush

Were such efforts ever to be undertaken by the US government, an NSPD would only be the first step. Time limitations tied to funding, regular updates to the deputies committee, and legislative oversight would all be required to ensure the organizations involved did not attempt some form of pushback, in an attempt to delay reorganization until calls for reform has subsided. Additionally, as public scrutiny increases pressure for success, the media should be involved in the announcement of the new organizational plan.

Ultimately, this proposal to reorganize the executive department boundaries meet the earlier established criteria of feasibility, cost, and acceptability. The proposal is feasible. Nothing prevents reorganization of the executive departments; in fact, the departments reorganize

themselves regularly. The cost of the proposal would be minimal. No new headquarters or major bureaus would be created and the total migration of responsibility from one region to another is no significant. The proposal could be acceptable. As stated earlier, the true strength of the reorganization model comes in its execution within existing acceptable practices.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the challenge of interagency coordination is one of the most compelling of this era. It requires the honest, forthright efforts of all the elements of national power, applied across the full spectrum of diplomacy and conflict. As it currently exists, the interagency coordination system is stove-piped and resistant to change. The inefficiencies resident in the system threaten the effectiveness of the entire national security and foreign policy establishment. These organizations are exclusively internally focused in their approach to operations across the world and habitually fail to coordinate with their executive department peers. Clearly, sweeping change is needed, but sweeping change is not easy. By their nature, the large bureaucracies of the executive departments are resistant to change and seek to defend their own position and resources from any outside influences. Previous attempts to reform the interagency system have met with failure because their scope was too large; the solution was so unacceptable to those involved that the entire organization resisted the decision, or the associated costs in new organizations or structures was too great. Any solution to the challenges of interagency coordination will have to be feasible, in terms of likelihood of acceptance or resistance by both decision makers and the affected agencies, cost effective, in terms of overhead for reorganization or creation of new organizations, and timely, in terms of duration to receive concurrence from decision makers and time required to implement the solution. A modest first step must be identified which meets all these criteria. The normalization of executive department boundaries can be that first step.

The boundaries the executive departments use to define their world wide operations are internally established and managed. These boundaries change as often as the leadership of the organization sees fit to do so. To change these boundaries to a single, national, standard would not engender the ire or resistance from an organization likely from more drastic changes. Rather, the change would be in the same vein as normal operations within the organization. Similarly, a boundary shift would have little associated cost. No new organizations would be created and no

new resources would be required to implement the change. Any personnel shifts which would result from reassignment of a country from one sub organization to another would be minor and could be accomplished through the cycle of natural attrition within an organization. Above all, a boundary shift would be timely. This process could begin with the stroke of the Presidential pen. No lengthy Congressional hearings or interagency wrangling would be required before beginning work. The establishment of a temporary policy coordination committee within the NSC would allow the process to be accomplished through existing structures and with existing personnel. Boundary normalization would also serve to remove many of the incongruities between the executive departments. As of January 2007, the DOD is the only executive department without a dedicated sub-organization for Africa. While that appears to be changing, this is a condition which has existed for decades. Additionally, DOD is the only executive department which places India and Pakistan in different regions. To separate the policy formulation for this region seems destined to fail. While the DOD officials who developed the UCP claim good reasons for this organization, their place as the only federal organization to do so calls into question the validity of their assumptions.

A normalized system would be more effective and more efficient. It would allow action officers of numerous organizations to develop a habitual relationship and, through that, increased trust in the other. True interagency coordination is not likely to be enforced from without, but is more likely to develop from within. A normalized system allows these relationships to begin.

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